

**AN EARTHWORK SURVEY OF A
SITE TO THE WEST OF GREAT
NOBURY IN INKBERROW
WSM 33627**

**UNDERTAKEN BY
WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENTS
IN
JULY 2004**



AN EARTHWORK SURVEY TO THE WEST OF GREAT NOBURY, INKBERROW

Aims of the project

Earthworks had been noted in a field to the west of Great Nobury Farm and the aim of the project was to establish whether the earthworks represent the remains of a possible mill site. The site of a mill had already been suggested for the area to the east of the large moated site at Little Nobury.

Method of fieldwork

An earthwork survey was carried out by a team of students from Hanley Castle High School and Worcester Sixth Form College on work experience training week. The site survey involved an offset tape measure survey of earthworks over the whole of the bottom section of the field (see map). This was recorded on a plan at 1:2000.

The Amman Brook which drains into the Piddle Brook and other watercourses surrounding the site were explored by wading up and down and walking along the banks.

Surrounding fields were explored for features and Round Hill was climbed to get an overview of the site.

Photographs were taken during the work and also of a ruined brick feature on the Amman Brook and re-used large timbers as a footbridge.

Analysis

Documentary Evidence for Inkberrow and Great and Little Nobury

Inkberrow was first mentioned in 1086 in the Domesday Book. It was listed as Great Inkberrow and Little Inkberrow and the Bishop of Hereford held the manor with 5 hides, a priest, seven villeins, four ploughs, and a meadow for the oxen, also a manor with 15 1/2 hides directly owned by the King. The latter had been 'wrongfully' held by Earl Harold, but King William restored it to the Bishop of Hereford.

Brief history of ownership of the manors of Inkberrow and Nobury

Around 1186 it appears that the Bishop of Worcester and the Bishop of Hereford had a dispute as to the ownership of the two manors. Until this time it appears that the Bishop of Hereford held the manors in lordship, however after the dispute had to pay the Bishop of Worcester a knight's fee for the two manors.

It then appears that the manor of Great Inkberrow was passed directly to John Marshall. The lordship of the Bishop of Worcester seems to have been recognized until 1323-1324 when it appears to have changed hands back to the Bishop of Hereford until the end of the 14th century.

Name of the Manor

The name 'Nobury' originates from the name 'Neubyri' around 1255 which means the 'new borough'.

The owners of the Inkberrow and Nobury

The first mentioned manor at Inkberrow was re-built in 1235 by Gilbert Marshall, who had inherited it from his brother, the Earl of Pembroke, who had died in Ireland that same year. The following year he was evidently building accommodation as the bailiffs of Feckenham were ordered to give him ten oaks from Werkwood to roof his houses.

Gilbert died in 1241 and his brother Walter succeeded him, who also died four years later, and his widow held it until 1267.

It then fell into the hands of the youngest daughter of Walter's dead brother Anslem, called Joan.

By 1392, the manor that Gilbert Marshal had built was in ruins, and it is not likely that it was rebuilt on the same site.

Henry Dyson was living in the new manor, and had likely been a member of the Nobury parish for some generations as C. Habington wrote, "The belfry of thys Church bvuilded and repaired by the family of Dyson" and the church tower dates from the mid-15th C, which connects them directly to the church for many generations.

After Henry Dyson's death, his property at Nobury was passed onto his son Robert and following his death, his eldest daughter Anne lived at Nobury, which had become a sheep walk, with her husband John Savage around 1687.

Mentions of a chapel and the Amman brook

Survey of the brook

A brick wall was on the inside of the bank on the east side. Some of the bricks have collapsed into the brook. These bricks are thought to have been an 18th/19th century sheep wash, however there was also mention of a sheep wash being used in Nobury towards the end of the 16th century. There were also some bricks on the bottom of the brook, which could possibly have been either the floor of the sheep wash or another collapsed wall. Further down the brook were some worked sandstones, which were about 10m apart, which suggests that there might have been a sluice at this point.

Also further down the brook were two timber beams that have been placed across the two banks. These two timbers had mortice slots for tenons, suggesting that they were re-used timbers from a substantial building. There were also some worked sandstone bricks on both banks and in the brook. On the west side of the bank were several worked stones that had been cemented together, forming a wall. These stones may have been part of a footbridge.

There was also evidence of a major bridge further down the brook. Several large worked stones were found piled up on the west side of the bank, there were also a few worked stones found on the opposite bank. These could have been part of a bridge that has since been replaced by the more modern bridge there today.

However there was also a suggestion that these large stones could have been re-used from a building, as there was evidence of some decoration carved into some of the blocks.

The Chapel

The chapel at Nobury was first mentioned in 1356 of which no remains can be found. The area at this time was chiefly owned by William de Zouch. In 1392, the Manor House was in a ruinous condition, "outside the walls stood a stone built chapel with roof of shingles and stone slats". It was described to have been in a state of disrepair in the seventeenth century by C Habington and is possibly the building shown on the 1817 Enclosure map in the field situated between Great Nobury Farm and the site of the Manor House. However, there is a discrepancy about whether references of Nobury "chapel" are indeed referring to Inkberrow "Church". It is a listed building in the "District Council Listed Building, Wychavon, 1959", there is a suggested site shown in the field previously mentioned.

Conclusions of the Earthwork survey

There are many suggestions as to the type of building that stood on this site.

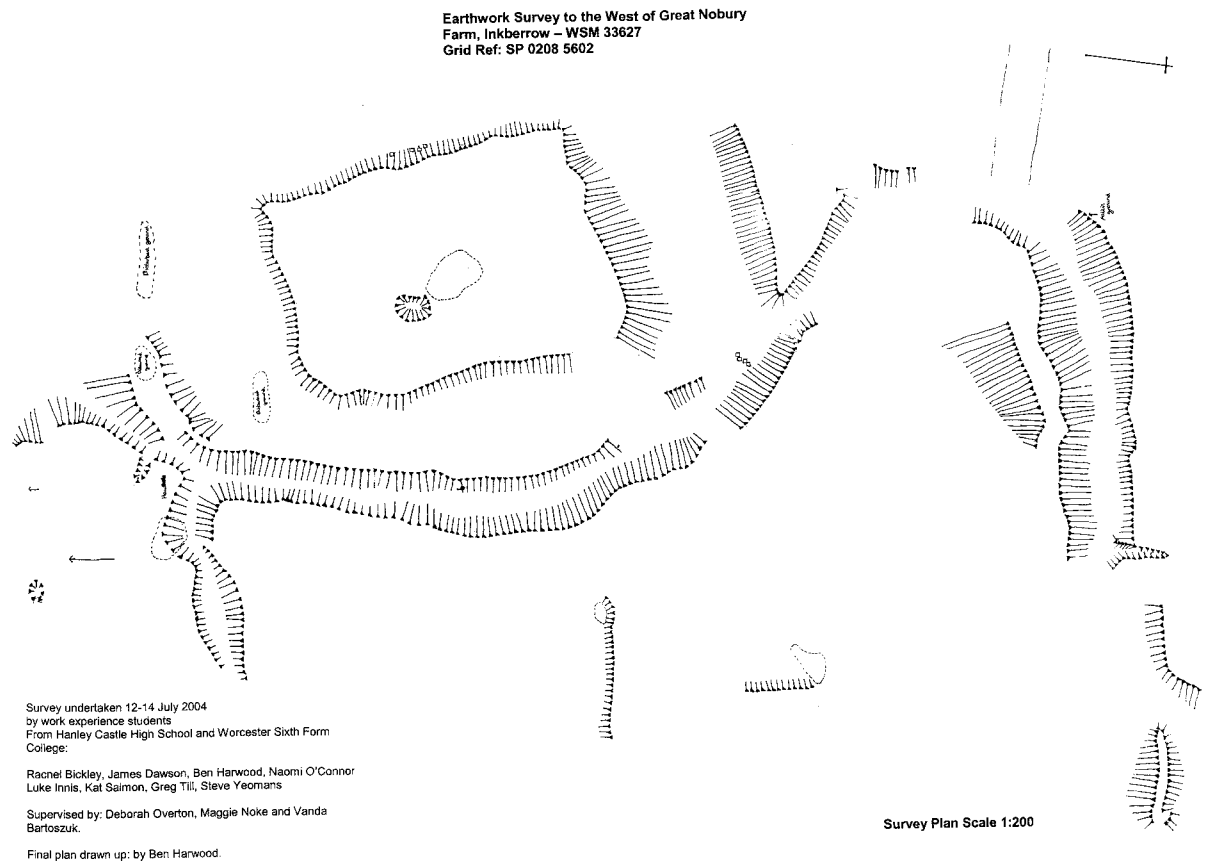
A Mill: The idea of a mill at this site stemmed from possible evidence of sluice gates/mill leat, indicated by a previous archeological visit and documentary evidence of two water mills and one windmill in Inkberrow in 1323, ('The Inkberrow Book' by Robert Hunt). However, the formation of the stonework at the site seemed to show a footbridge rather than a sluice gate, indeed a footbridge is recorded on first edition Ordnance-survey map. The other structure in the Amman Brook also comprised of worked sandstone blocks, which could be another footbridge. The boundaries of Inkberrow apparently stop short of Nobury, in other words, the mills listed are unlikely to be situated on this site. As to the mill leat, the ditch when surveyed appears to look more natural than man-made, due to its 'meandering nature'.

A Barn/Farm House: A barn was suggested as being a possible building on the 'platform' found, (after looking at the results of the earthwork survey and finding a stone platform with the surveying arrows). However, research into the structure of barns in the medieval period shows that more space than the site seems to provide was necessary. The 'entrance' to the platform is perhaps too small for the farm carts/other farm vehicles of the time.

A Manor House: The platform could also have been the situation of a Manor house and the stone foundations that have been discovered on the platform, would still seem to fit to this idea. Looking closer at the history of the area, more evidence is provided for this theory. The author Robert Hunt, states, "it is necessary to believe that the new manor house was built at Great Nobury. The enclosure map, 1817, shows the uneven area west of today's farmhouse, has a paddock surrounded by water. Within the paddock were three other enclosures: (1) a rectangular area, called 'Little Orchard'. This area is mounded, has a possible moat and is traditionally the site of the original house, (2) a brookside enclosure called 'Garden', (3) an irregular area called 'Old House Orchard'." (More About Inkberrow, p12). All these areas can be seen from the surveyed map of the site, giving more credibility to the theory of a Manor house. 'Historic Farm Buildings' by Susanna Wade Martins, depicts the site of Longham Hall (Norfolk), a medieval Manor house situated inside a perimeter moat,

(p20), this is almost identical to our own surveyed site with the idea of a Manor House. However, in 'Medieval Housing' by Jane Grenville, the author states that, "domestic building in stone was...rare in the century and a half after the conquest", (p63) and this must be considered.

Plan of Site Survey



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